

Kansas State Agencies Measure 2012 Wheat Crop Quality, Losses to Disease

Two recent reports from state agencies have given us a greater understanding of the 2012 Kansas wheat crop.

Kansas Ag Statistics and the Kansas Grain Inspection Service released the annual Wheat Quality report on Tuesday. The crop averaged 61.1 pounds per bushel, down slightly from last year's 61.2 pounds, while the 10-year average from 2001 - 2010 was 60.5 pounds per bushel.

Protein content averaged 12.4 percent, down from 12.8 percent for 2011 but slightly higher than 12.3 percent for the 10-year average. The Southwest District led the State with 13.5 percent protein, a 0.3 percent increase from last year and up 0.6 percent from the 10-year average. Statewide, moisture content averaged 11.1 percent, up from 11.0 percent last year but down from 11.4 percent for the 10-year average.

Samples of wheat grading No. 1, at 83 percent, were down 3 points from 86 percent last year. Sixteen percent graded No. 2, compared to 13 percent in 2011, and only 1 percent graded No. 3 or below. Wheat samples averaged 0.2 percent damaged kernels, same as 2011 but down from 0.4 for the 10-year average. Samples tested had less than 0.1 percent foreign material on average, the same as 2011 but below the 10-year average. Shrunken and broken kernels averaged 1.4 percent, up from 1.1 in 2011 and slightly higher with the 10-year average of 1.3. Total defects averaged 1.6 percent, compared to 1.4 in 2011 and 1.7 for the 10-year average. Average dockage for all samples was 0.5 percent, the same percentage as last year.

There were 3,813 samples voluntarily submitted for inspection in the 2012 crop year. The test weight for these samples also averaged 60.5 pounds per bushel, while protein was 12.7 percent, and moisture content was 11.3 percent. Seventy-three percent of the submitted samples graded No.1 while 22 percent graded No. 2 and 5 percent were other grades.

The report, available online at www.nass.usda.gov/ks, is based on 11,200 carlot samples from 46 counties.

Diseases Cost Farmers Nearly 58 Million Bushels

In late August, the Kansas Department of Agriculture and K-State's Department of Plant Pathology estimated that diseases cost Kansas wheat farmers about 57.6 million bushels in 2012; or nearly 13% of the total wheat crop. That is about average, according to the 2012 Kansas Wheat Disease Loss Estimates.

With an estimated 25.9 million bushels in lost yield, stripe rust was the biggest culprit. Many farmers planted wheat varieties that were at least partially susceptible to stripe rust, requiring them to spray fungicide on the crop this spring. Still, more than 10% of the crop in central and south central Kansas was lost to the disease.

Barley Yellow Dwarf cost farmers about 10.4 million bushels, of lost crop in 2012, which represents about 2.3% of the state's total wheat crop. That's a tick lower than last year's 2.7%. The virus affected a greater area in 2012 due to a greater spread of the BYD virus by aphids.

Lesion nematodes were found in 14 counties of central and western Kansas, causing an estimated 10.4 million bushels.

Wheat streak mosaic complex affected central and northeast Kansas the most, with some fields showing 80% or more damage. Statewide, about 5.4 million bushels were lost. The WSM virus is exacerbated by the presence of volunteer wheat that bridges the disease from the old crop of wheat to the new crop.

Finally, losses associated with leaf rust totaled about 4.6 million bushels, down from the historical average of 2.9%. The use of fungicide spraying followed by dry weather kept the disease in check.